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## DONORS LINING UP FOR PROPOSED MONTANA HERITAGE CENTER

The private sector already has pledged \$2.6 million for the proposed Montana Heritage Center that would be built across the street north of the State Capitol, Montana Historical Society Director Bruce Whittenberg said.

“We are grateful to those who have already pledged donations for this important project and have shown their support for meeting the critical needs for preserving, collecting, exhibiting, and interpreting the rich history and heritage of all of the people of Montana,” Whittenberg said.

The 15-member Montana Historical Society Board of Trustees and MHS staff have also had many discussions with other potential donors, who are waiting to see if the Montana Legislature approves HB 14, now pending before the House Appropriations Committee, that would approve \$23 million in bonding authority and \$5.5 million from other sources for the project, Whittenberg said.

“Private sector support for the Heritage Center is strong. Many individual and other potential donors are supportive of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, but want assurance that the Legislature commits to funding that will ensure this project happens,” he said. “We are looking forward to initiating a fundraising campaign and working with the Montana History Foundation on future fund raising efforts.”

Amy Sullivan, head of the Montana History Foundation, said her group has established a fiscal sponsorship relationship with MHS for the project, and will offer planned giving options to donors as it moves forward.

Pete Johnson, president and CEO of American Federal Savings Bank, said directors of the Montana based bank “recognized the value in the expansion, renovation and creation of the new Montana Heritage Center.” The bank has committed \$50,000 for the project.

“The bank chose to make this substantial donation to preserve Montana’s rich history and for the education it provides to Montanans of all ages,” Johnson said. “American Federal is committed to help promote the quality of life in its service areas and this investment is one that will benefit the entire state and visitors who come here.”

Whittenberg said Johnson’s comments echo those of many others who support the project.

“Montanans are not only proud of their history and heritage, they recognize the important role that it plays in developing the Montana citizens of tomorrow and to the broad range of economic benefits it generates from attracting new business to tourism,” Whittenberg said.

The Heritage Center will be located across the street from the current Montana Historical Society Building, which will be remodeled, and both facilities will be linked by a concourse.

Significant pledges for the Montana Heritage Center have been received from Thomas Nygard of Bozeman, the Greater Montana Foundation, Treacy Foundation, American Federal Savings Bank, Steve and Judy Browning, Helena, and Browning, Kaleczyc, Berry & Hoven PC of Helena. In addition MHS has received donations and pledges from nearly 100 individuals and groups from Montana and other states many of whom are MHS members.